

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT







#### CATSKILLCENTER

43355 Route 28

(845) 586-2611 / cccd@catskillcenter.org CATSKILLCENTER.ORG

#### CATSKILLCENTER

# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jeff Senterman



Since 1969, the Catskill Center had been dedicated to making a difference across the Catskills and every year we see many accomplishments. That said, 2017 was a year where everyone at the Catskill Center worked together to bring our organization to the next level.

2017 WAS A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR FOR THE CATSKILL CENTER. WE SET IN MOTION A SERIES OF NEW INITIATIVES AND COMPLETED SEVERAL EFFORTS, ALL WITH THE GOAL OF EMBRACING THE CATSKILL CENTER'S ROLE AS A KEY COLLABORATOR, INTERPRETER AND STEWARD OF THE CATSKILLS.

In 2017 we completed and adopted our new 5-year strategic plan. Creation of the document was a collective effort. The Board of Directors, staff and stakeholders began work shortly after my arrival in 2015. Drafted to set a strategic direction for the Catskill Center over the next several years, the plan's design has allowed us to focus on several new efforts in key areas of the Catskill Center's mission, highlighted by exciting new developments at the Catskill Interpretive Center.

In order to realize the long-term goal of creating a world class visitor center for the Catskill Park and a gateway to the entire Catskills region, 2017 saw considerable investment in the Catskill Interpretive Center.

Thanks to funding from New York State, construction began on a new pavilion which will provide space for the public to picnic and will allow us to host events and activities in a beautiful and functional outdoor environment. We at Catskill Center invested in a design process to reimagine the exhibits of the Catskill Interpretive Center. The exhibits are slated for installation in 2018 and will allow the Interpretive Center to better inspire an understanding and appreciation for our wonderous Catskills.

New staff joined our team at the Catskill Interpretive Center in 2017. Sarah McGinnis joined the Catskill Center as the first full-time Director of the Catskill Interpretive Center and now leads a team of several part-time employees, in addition to the dozens of volunteers who help ensure visitors to the Interpretive Center are warmly greeted and have all of their questions answered. From creating new handouts for visitors, to managing major events that brings hundreds of people to the Catskill Interpretive Center, Sarah and her team focus on efforts to improve the Catskill Interpretive Center daily.

The Strategic Plan called for investments in marketing and branding efforts for the Catskill Center and in 2017 we began the process by assessing our current work, identifing needs and we began to make changes and improvements.



That included welcoming Heather Phelps-Lipton to our team as the Communications Director for the Catskill Center, the creation of our beautiful new quarterly newsletter, an increased social media presence and an uplift of our communications.

2017 was the year that our Streamside Acquisition Program became fully realized, with a full staff and a close working relationship with our partner in the program, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. The future of the Streamside Acquisition Program brightened when New York City's 2017 Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) by the New York State Department of Health for their Catskill water supply included language calling for the extension of the current pilot program in the Schoharie Creek watershed and its eventual expansion into the entire Catskills watershed.

## THE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM OF THE CATSKILL CENTER WAS REVAMPED IN 2017. MEMBERS OF THE CATSKILL CENTER NOW ENJOY A NUMBER OF BENEFITS

including discounts at Catskill Center shops (at the Erpf Center and the Catskill Interpretive Center) and local retailers, the printed quarterly newsletter, access to the exclusive membership lecture and education program series, invites to special events and more. Members are the backbone of the Catskill Center and we are now better able to show our appreciation and recognize their support.

2017 was the first year of the new five-year Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) contract between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Catskill Center. As host to CRISP, the Catskill Center leads efforts to combat and manage invasive species that threaten our native ecosystems.

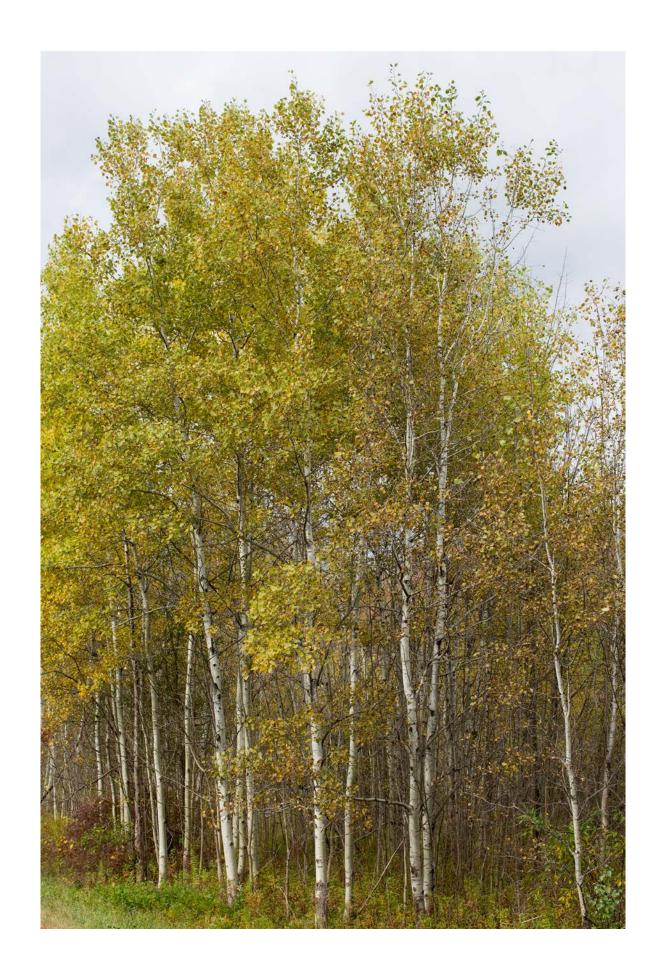
That only represents the new efforts of the Catskill Center. We also saw success in many of our continuing efforts, including our advocacy work in Albany to bring more resources to the Catskill Park. In 2017, thanks to the efforts of the Catskill Park Coalition, (which the Catskill Center co-chairs) we saw more than \$10 million in investment from New York State in the Catskill Park including new access points, improved parking, safety improvements at Kaaterskill Falls, upgrades and repairs at State Campgrounds and much more.



Our Artist-In-Residence Program at the Platte Clove Preserve celebrated its 19th year with more than a dozen artists each enjoying the solitude of Platte Clove and the uniqueness of our rugged Artist's Cabin for a week at a time. We saw multiple shows celebrating Catskill artists at the Erpf Gallery and a new 'sculpture trail' opened at the Catskill Interpretive Center, showcasing artists who have been influenced by the Catskills.

Thanks to a very generous donor, we were able to rehabilitate the Thorn Preserve's cottage, and begin a multi-year process to improve public access to this very popular preserve in Woodstock.

A new parking area is planned for 2018 and new trails are to be built in 2019.



Improvements continued at the Platte Clove Preserve; we celebrated the opening of a new nature loop and the re-opening of our Plattekill Falls Trail. Both trails were reconstructed by Americorps trail crews who were brought to the Preserve through a partnership with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

With the support of the Board of Directors, work commenced on becoming an accredited land trust in the fall of 2017. Accreditation certifies that the Catskill Center meets strict standards of ethical and financially responsible operation which enhance grant and foundation funding opportunities.

ALL OF THIS WORK REPRESENTS OUR COMBINED EFFORTS ACROSS THE CATSKILLS. IT'S WORK THAT'S FROM THE GROUND UP, IS ABOUT THE CATSKILLS AND IS FOR THE CATSKILLS. THE CATSKILL CENTER WORKS TIRELESSLY TO PRESERVE, ENHANCE AND ENRICH THE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING OF THE CATSKILLS.

As we enter our 49th year of service in 2018, we are looking forward to our 50th anniversary in 2019. We know it's not just about what we have done, but what we will do moving ahead and if 2017 is any indication, the sky is the limit when our members and supporters, our board and our staff all look ahead and do the work that needs to be done.

JEFF SENTERMAN

Executive Director



### CATSKILLCENTER FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Catskill Center's last fiscal year was from January 1 through December 1, 2017, during which time operating revenue totaled \$1,261,494. 54% of this revenue came from contracts (\$682,431), 21% from investment allocation for operations (\$270,000), 10% from contributions and membership (\$126,489), 7% from grant revenue (\$89,689), and 8% from rent, investments and other sources (\$92,885). Operating expenses totaled \$1,407,934-of which 81% was for program activities (\$1,144,905), 11% for organizational administration and overhead (\$158,762), and 8% for fundraising (\$104,267).

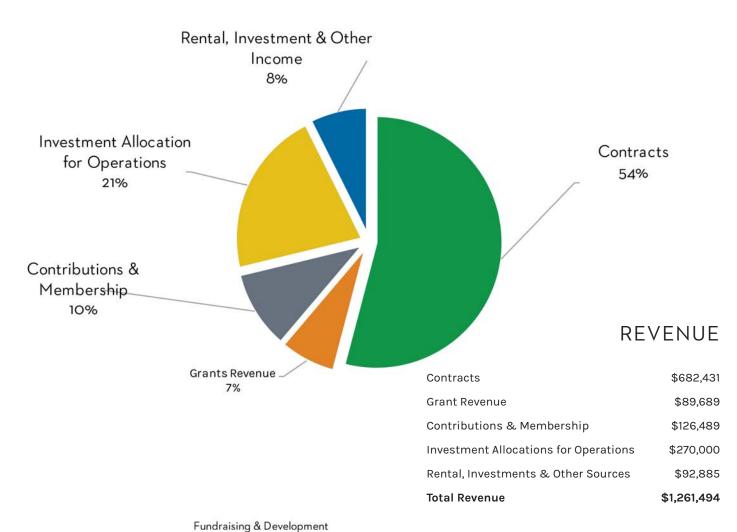
SINCE 1969, WE HAVE LED THE EFFORT TO PROTECT THE MORE THAN 700,000 ACRES OF THE CATSKILL PARK AND CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE.

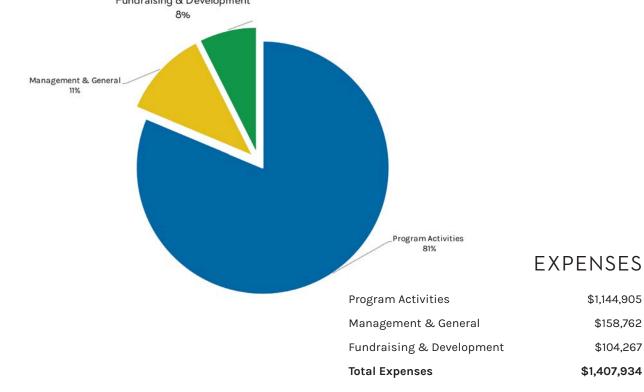
Financial Structure The Catskill Center maintains one investment account (market value of \$3,356,677 on December 31, 2017).

This account is used to support capital costs and expenses related to the Erpf House and the Center's other properties, and as a Board designated fund for general operating expenses. The assets are pooled in a diversified portfolio supervised by the Audit and Finance Committee. Total investment return was a gain of \$509,058 in 2017.

Each year the Board sets a spending rate for operating purposes from the endowment, which was set at \$270,000 for 2017.

The Board engages Mostert, Manzanero & Scott LLP to perform an independent audit.







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